Main Principles

The reading indicates that the foundation of multicultural education is the commitment to pluralism and the notion that schools ought to be ready to help students to join a multicultural, democratic society. According to the chapter, diversity is merely the state where there are numerous groups and pluralism is a state where the diversity is tolerated and encouraged within a society. Multicultural education not only argues with racism and other discrimination in schools and society but also supports the pluralism in ethnicity, race, language, religion, economics and gender. The text reports the bewilderment of the term, where some teachers believe it refers to the combination of race and ethnicity issues, and that others view it as the sale of the cultures in the world. The definition that is widely held by Nieto focuses on the fact that multicultural education is the process of whole-school reform and that it infiltrates the curriculum, instruction, interactions, and school philosophy.

The chapter compares multicultural education with essentialism that is concerned with imparting of an essential body of knowledge. Essentialist schools have a tendency to focus on memorizing, tracking, and set curriculum that students need to ingest. This model is argued in the reading as it disregards the differences of knowledge explosion in the learning rates, as well as the necessity of meaningful learning. Multicultural education advocates a conceptual curriculum, with multiple views, questioning favoritism in texts, and through the use of theme areas such as identity, and justice. It also deals with the hidden curriculum in which schools convey values through images, policies, and language.

Reflective Comments

This chapter challenged me to reflect on how my personal teaching practices need to change in order to assist students in the pluralistic society. The notion that multicultural education defies racism and any kind of discrimination and endorses the pluralism that students inject in the classroom made me reflect on whether my teaching is inclusive of all the students or mostly a reflection of dominant views. This chapter as an educator motivates me to analyze the presence of hidden curriculum in my classroom in terms of policies, expectations or materials that I employ. My essentialism debate also made me remember that one cannot teach without context by learning facts in isolation. Students require learning related to their lives, promoting critical thinking, and accepting various perspectives.

In Christian worldview, the pluralist call to affirm pluralism will indicate the understanding that everyone is created in the image of God and has the right to dignity and representation. Neighborly love implies that one needs to respect cultural identities and criticize systems that are oppressing or isolating others. The scripture challenges the believers to seek justice and multicultural education fits the call by focusing on inequity and inclusion. This chapter inspires me to change my approach to teaching to accommodate students with different backgrounds, incorporate various views within the curriculum, and make students perceive themselves as competent contributors.